



Canadian International
Development Agency

Agence canadienne de
développement international

Agriculture in Third World Countries



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(CIDA photo: J. White)

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(CIDA photo: J. White)

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Drawbacks to Agricultural Development

The population of the Third World is composed primarily of farmers. Of these, a high proportion are women who grow at least half of the food produced in developing countries.

In many of these countries, there are both political and physical constraints on agricultural production. Politically, governments often encourage the cultivation, not of foodstuffs necessary to feed the population, but of crops intended for export. Small farmers bear the brunt of this situation, because the crops they grow are either exported or taken to town to be consumed by the urban élite.

Moreover, some farmers do not have access to government-sponsored services such as credit. Consequently, they are unable to invest money in the purchase of land or the farming equipment they need. Those who rent land are often exploited by the landowners, who charge excessive rates. Farmers are frequently dispossessed of their lands, or inherit barren, spent tracts in the mountains. Through their overuse of this fragile soil, farmers increase the risk of erosion, one of the most destructive forces affecting agriculture.

In addition to erosion, desertification and salinization pose serious threats to agriculture. In the case of desertification, over-grazing, intensive farming and deforestation hasten the desert's advance. With salinization, the root of the problem is the insufficient use of irrigation techniques, as water from underground sources rises to the surface and evaporates, leaving a residue of minerals and salts that stifles plant growth.

Farmers do not have to contend solely with ecological hindrances, but also with vagaries of the weather — rain, drought and so on. In addition, they must protect their herds from epidemics and their land from the animals, birds and insects that can cause serious damage.

Canadian Agricultural Solutions

Many of these problems, of course, cannot be solved overnight. To a large extent, prospects for improvement lie with the governments of Third World countries undertaking to revise their policies so as to accord higher priority to agricultural production. Progress also depends, however, on the willingness of the governments of the developed countries to increase their technical and financial assistance to Third World countries. This, in essence, is what Canada is attempting to do by shar-



(CIDA photo: J. Williamson)

ing its agricultural skills where these are relevant to developing countries' needs. To this end, the Canadian government has given the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) responsibility for identifying and administering worthwhile agricultural projects making use of Canadian resources. The major fields of activity are training, research, various agricultural techniques (dryland farming, grain storage, combatting plant diseases, control of harmful insects, processing of agricultural products, multiplication, certification and distribution of seed, management of pastureland), and the creation of farm credit institutions.

Training

In Morocco, CIDA made a \$5 million grant-in-aid for a technical assistance project at the Hassan II National Institute of Agronomy and Veterinary Sciences. For 10 years (1973-82), a team of Canadian teachers was provided to train surveyors in the geodetic sciences (surveying, photogrammetry and cartography), while technical officers were being trained over a five-year period (1974-78) at the School of Rural Engineering and Surveying. Cana-

da provided the teaching materials necessary for presenting these highly technical subjects and also ensured the training in Canada of the Moroccan team responsible for taking over once the Canadians leave.

Research

In its efforts to promote agricultural research, CIDA provides assistance to the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), an informal association of multilateral and bilateral organizations and private foundations, formed for the purpose of financing 13 international agricultural research centres. The CGIAR has been associated with Southeast Asia's "green revolution", a catch-phrase that refers to the cultivation of high-yield crop varieties in the Third World.

Through CGIAR, CIDA has granted a total of \$9.2 million to 10 of these centres this year, one of which is the International Centre of Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), which has its headquarters in Cali, Colombia. It received \$1.2 million to work on increasing the quality of bean, rice and cassava crops in the Caribbean and Latin America, and to develop techniques for using land, particularly infertile land, in the region more productively. As a result of the work performed by CIAT in Colombia, rice production rose from 3 metric tons per hectare in 1968 to 5.2 metric tons per hectare in 1980, and the amount of land irrigated for rice-growing increased from 115,000 hectares in 1969 to 230,000 hectares in 1977. Today Colombia is a rice-exporting country.

In the other 20 countries of Latin America, the average 1967 production of 2 metric tons per hectare rose to 3.2 metric tons per hectare by 1978. This work was carried out in cooperation with the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI).

Dryland Farming (cereal production using rainwater)

In 1970 the Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR), in cooperation with the Canadian government, set up a dryland farming project in India to carry out experiments under varying soil and weather conditions. The project goals were to use the land and water more efficiently in agricultural production, to develop techniques for increasing crop yield and to improve dryland farming so as to lessen susceptibility to climatic phenomena.

CIDA's participation consisted of delegating Canadian personnel, defraying their travel costs and those of their Indian counterparts, and providing equipment for laboratory and field work. CIDA also funded the construction of a research and training centre at Hyderabad. Research activities conducted there by farmers and specialists have been quite successful: in two villages, land yield has doubled, owing to the use of improved varieties of seed, more efficient sowing techniques, chemical fertilizers and better control over parasites.

Grain Storage

In 1979, in cooperation with the Zambia National Agriculture Marketing Board (NAMBOARD), CIDA began work on a construction project for 36 storage sheds covered with stainless steel sheathing. These facilities are used to store 163,260 metric tons of corn, while another 28 sheds are being used to store 98,000 metric tons of fertilizer. The Canadians participating in this project are providing technical assistance and setting up training programs so that Zambians will later be able to carry on this warehousing system.

Plant Diseases and Harmful Insects

In 1977 CIDA launched a major plant protection project in Niger designed to provide the people with the means of combatting diseases and harmful insects. This \$10 million undertaking, to be completed in 1982, covers technical assistance, training, equipment, insecticides and the construction of storage sheds and offices.

Processing of Agricultural Products (slaughterhouses, dairy industries, processing of fruits and vegetables)

In 1978 CIDA contributed \$4,332,000 to Peru in order to set up dairy farming operations in the Pisco Valley. The project was carried out by a non-governmental organization, the Canadian Hunger Foundation. Funding was allocated for technical assistance, training of nationals, transport of livestock and purchase of equipment.

Multiplication, Certification and Distribution of Seed

In 1980 CIDA donated \$192,000 to OXFAM Canada to help women in the Dominican Republic increase the production and use of certified seed. The project goal was to teach farmers the theories and practices involved in the production of certified seed, with a view to increasing food supplies for local consumption (beans, corn, rice, vegetables) and for export, as cash crops (coffee, cocoa, peanuts).

Management of Pastureland for More Efficient Land Use

In 1980 CIDA contributed \$75,410 to a soil conservation project in Bolivia in cooperation with the Canadian Hunger Foundation. The prime objective of the project was to help refugees settle on land in the Santa Cruz area and manage it efficiently. A variety of methods were employed: crop rotation; establishment of cattle-breeding centres; provision of credit for the purchase of livestock and the establishment of feedlot operations; provision of veterinary services; use of animals for clearing the land; and consolidation of agricultural cooperative structures.

Creation of Farm Credit Institutions

CIDA will lend \$25 million to India's Agriculture Refinance and Development Corporation (ARFC) between 1981 and 1984 for the purpose of providing credit on favorable conditions for small farmers, small plot owners, and landless peasants in the poorest regions of the country. These funds are to be used for the digging of wells, irrigation of lands, and the breeding of poultry, sheep and swine. CIDA's contribution forms part of a much larger program that encompasses some U.S.\$ 1 billion in farm credit and extends over two years. In addition to CIDA's loan, the International Development Association (IDA) of the World Bank is providing U.S.\$ 250 million, and Indian sources are making up the remaining amount.

CIDA's Chief Partners in Agricultural Development

Implementation of the activities described above requires the participation of CIDA and a number of other partners in development. There are various ways in which CIDA lends support to agricultural development: it prepares bilateral agreements between Canada and Third World countries so as to identify these countries' agricultural priorities and ensure that Canadian assistance corresponds to these priorities; for the implementation of agricultural projects, CIDA recruits Canadians having the necessary special skills; and it makes use of services available from universities, provincial governments, professional associations and the private sector.

CIDA also promotes agricultural development by supporting the activities of international organizations, such as agencies of the United Nations (United Nations Development Program, International Fund for Agricultural Development,

Food and Agriculture Organization), financial institutions (World Bank, regional development banks), and research centres supported by the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research.

In addition, Canadian non-governmental organizations (NGOs), such as CUSO and CARE Canada, and international organizations, such as the Commonwealth Association of Scientific Agricultural Societies, receive grants from CIDA to undertake agricultural development projects in Third World countries. CIDA's NGO program is designed to help Canadians establish relationships as equals and partners with people of developing countries, offering them the range of skills and services available within the NGOs.


Lastly, CIDA's federal/provincial program, Voluntary Agricultural Development Assistance, is very active in the field of agriculture and its chief contributors, besides the federal and provincial governments, are private groups, individuals and non-governmental organizations.

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Produced by the Public Affairs Branch
Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)
200 Promenade du Portage
Hull, Quebec
K1A 0G4

Tel.: (819) 997-6100



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